

NOMINATION FORM

2010 ENVIRONMENTAL HERO OF THE NORTH BAY AWARD

Assemblymember Jared Huffman will honor an outstanding organization or individual for leadership, innovation, and community service in promoting environmental stewardship.

NOMINEE INFORMATION:

ORGANIZATION:

Organization: **Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA)**

Address: **1 Bear Valley Rd, Building 70** City, State, Zip: **Point Reyes Station, CA 94956**

Phone: **415-663-1200** Website: www.ptreyes.org

WRITTEN STATEMENT:

How has this nominee demonstrated leadership and innovation in environmental stewardship?

What is exceptional about this nominee?

Please describe how the nominee's accomplishments have positively impacted the environment.

NOMINATOR'S STATEMENT:

There are moments in time when a rare opportunity presents itself that is beneficial to all, that with the right leadership and innovation can provide an outstanding legacy to our natural environment for everyone's benefit, forever; the Giacomini Wetlands Restoration Project was such an event.

The stars had aligned themselves, Waldo Giacomini and his family owned and worked the ranch for decades. With government help and encouragement the wetlands had been claimed for pasture to increase the milk production after the war. After all those years they were interested in selling. At the same time, money from different sources was available to the National Park service for acquisition. NPS management, PRNSA and others began to collaborate towards making the Wetlands Restoration Project a reality.

Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA) raised more than \$6.2 million for the restoration of the nearly 560 acres of former dairy land back to historical wetland habitat. PRNSA also managed the construction phase of the project in which a full 50% of Tomales Bay's estuarine wetlands were restored. This project restored ecological and hydrologic functions that have allowed for significantly improved and new habitat for a number of threatened and endangered species including the tidewater goby, red-legged frog, California clapper rail, California black rail, and coho salmon. Restoring traditional hydrological functions has also reduced flooding of nearby roads and residences and significantly increased the water quality of Tomales Bay.

In addition to dramatically improving fish and wildlife habitat on the 556-acre tract, the project reestablished the health, connectivity, and viability of Tomales Bay watershed's open water, vegetated wetland and riparian habitats. Few non-profits have shown an ability to fundraise at such a level and provide the leadership necessary to maximize its benefits.

As swift and dramatic as nature has been in reclaiming this area, that is by no means the end of this story or this project. In a world where environmental problems can seem overwhelming, PRNSA is developing a curriculum that will use this project as an example of how, with a little help from man, impaired habitats can restore themselves swiftly and with significant and perpetual benefits to wildlife, to humans, and to the wider ecosystem.

The swift return of habitat and wildlife in the wetlands serves as a unique classroom for instilling scientific literacy and inspiring a hopeful connection to nature in the next generation.

PRNSA has raised funds to ensure that children from underserved communities will be included in this program. Hundreds of children locally and from throughout the Bay Area will be awarded scholarships to attend residential environmental programs at the Clem Miller Environmental Education Center. Children from the inner-city, from local ranches, to Native Americans and recently arrived refugees will all be given the opportunity to learn from and be inspired by this unique project.

For their holistic approach with the National Park Service and community partners in conceptualizing, funding and implementing this project that will benefit the North Bay and our state in perpetuity and for their ongoing, innovative approach to sharing the lessons of this project through education, I nominate the Point Reyes National Seashore Association to be the recipient of the 2010 Environmental Hero of the North Bay Award.